

CTC NEWSLETTER

*Career Transition Center
George P. Shultz National Foreign Affairs Training Center
U.S. Department of State*

The Top 10 Blunders Of Online Job Hunters

*- By Marc Cenedella, published in CareerJournal.com,
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When it comes to using the Internet to find a job, a lot of very smart people are making some very stupid mistakes.

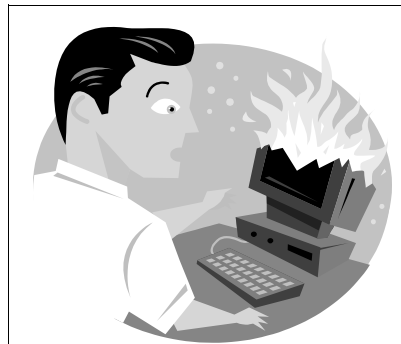
As head of a job-search service for executives, I'm consistently surprised by the bungling that can occur when otherwise talented candidates take their job hunt online.

The following is a list of the top 10 online job-search blunders gleaned from the job-hunt horror stories and other howlers I've encountered in recent years.

Having seen plenty of candidates navigate their online search with ease, I've also included tips on how to avoid making these foul-ups.

1. 'Mis-merged' cover letters.

E-mail has all but replaced the traditional cover letter, making it simple to cut and paste copies of the same letter to different hiring managers. But be careful. It's very easy to foul up the "merge" function in an e-mail, resulting in gaffes like: "I'd like to put my skills to work at IBM," when applying for a job



"A computer lets you make more mistakes faster than any invention in human history — with the possible exceptions of hand guns and tequila."

- Mitch Ratliffe

at Hewlett-Packard.

2. One person, one job, one e-mail.

The Internet has made the job-hunt process into a direct-marketing game. Though it may seem like you've been given a direct line of communication to a hiring manager, the reality is that this manager is getting hundreds of resumes each day. While 10 great jobs are out there waiting for you, you may need to send 1,000 e-mails to become an active candidate for them.

3. Goofy personal e-mail addresses.

Personal interests outside of work and a sense of humor are both valuable assets to any top executive. But they should have nothing to do with your e-mail address when applying for a job. Who really wants to hire a senior vice president of sales who has a screen name like Snickerdoodle453@pastrylover.com, or, worse, the egotistical CommissionKing@sold.com?

*"Intel has announced its next chip:
the Repentium."*

- Anonymous

4. Fun with fonts.

In their haste to stand out from the pack of job applicants, many ill-advised job seekers use bright colors and exotic fonts in their resumes and e-mails. It's a mistake. In e-mail, the best bet is to use a plain-text format; it's the only way to ensure that your creative fonts won't turn into gibberish on another e-mail system. In an MS Word document, slight variations on Times New Roman and Arial are both commonly accepted; black and white should be the only colors on the page.

5. Playing out of your league.

For some reason, when applicants respond to electronic job listings via e-mail, they often exhibit delusions of career grandeur. This phenomenon is due in large part to the fact that the Internet has made applying so easy; it's just an e-mail, so why not take a flier on a senior-management position, even though you aren't qualified? It's a waste of time for both you and the recruiters. Don't fall into this common productivity trap.

6. 'What if my boss finds my resume?'

You aren't likely to get fired for looking for a new job; it isn't an actionable cause or misconduct. If anything, finding out you're looking will prompt your boss to improve your package, your working conditions or your position in order to keep you. If you're in the job market, commit to it; if you want to keep your existing job, commit to that. Indecision is transparent in half-hearted cover letters and weak-willed interviews.

7. Resume as bio.

A resume should be more like a brochure that sells a product than a bio. Too often, resumes are laden with every conceivable detail of a candidate's work and life experiences. While these details may be interesting to you and your loved ones, if they don't sell the employer on hiring you for the specific job to which you're applying, omit them.

8. Run-on resumes.

A resume shouldn't exceed two pages. Period. Although you aren't actually printing and mailing the document, applying online doesn't provide a license to use a 10-page treatise in place of a concise, well-crafted resume.

9. Jack-of-all-trades resume.

It's easy to apply for a great variety of jobs online, many of which may be relevant targets given your diverse background. But you still need to tailor your pitch to each opportunity. If an orchestra is looking for a flute player, expounding on how much you love all kinds of music isn't going to get you the interview.

10. Thinking 'Send' is the end.

The Internet has made job hunting easier. That doesn't mean you can click "Send" on an e-mail and think your work is done. The Internet helps you find leads and contact them, but you still need to follow up. Get on the phone, network with friends and former colleagues, and work your way to the top of the resume pile the old-fashioned way -- with persistence.

It's a common misconception that top-level executives and employees earning more

*"They have computers, and they may have
other weapons of mass destruction."*

- Janet Reno

than \$100,000 per year are naturally proficient job hunters. But think about it: How many times in your life do you look for a new job? Three? Maybe five?

As online recruiting keeps growing, e-mail and electronic resumes are increasingly a job seeker's first line of communication. First impressions count. Many well-qualified applicants are being overlooked because of lousy formatting and other needless errors. It's common to make mistakes. But it's also easy to avoid them.

-- Mr. Cenedella is president of *TheLadders.com*, an executive job-search service in New York City.



"Computers are like Old Testament gods; lots of rules and no mercy."

- - Joseph Campbell

EDITOR'S NOTES



Here are some sources of additional information on e-mailed resumes:

Argus Technical Services List of Keywords -

[www.argus-tech.com/resume/
other-ke.htm](http://www.argus-tech.com/resume/other-ke.htm)

The Riley Guide—

www.rileyguide.com/eresume.html

The Wall Street Journal's CareerJournal.com -

[http://www.careerjournal.com/jobhunting/
resumes/](http://www.careerjournal.com/jobhunting/resumes/)

Kate Wendleton

Building a Great Resume

Robbie Miller Kaplan

How to Say It In Your Job Search

Robbie Miller Kaplan

Resume Shortcuts: How to Quickly Communicate Your Qualifications With Powerful Words and Phrases

Robbie Miller Kaplan

Sure-Hire Resumes

ProvenResumes.com -

[www.provenresumes.com/reswkshps/
electronic/electresp1.html](http://www.provenresumes.com/reswkshps/electronic/electresp1.html)

Quintessential Careers -

www.quintcareers.com/e-resumes.html



"The word user is the word used by the computer professional when they mean idiot."

- Dave Barry

JOB LEADS

The American Councils for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS seeks volunteers to evaluate the scholarship applications of students from the republics of the former Soviet Union.

The Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) program, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, will bring 1,200 students to the U.S. to spend one year living with an American family and attending a U.S. high school.

Evaluation of applications will take place from November 2004 through March 2005. Training will be provided on how to evaluate the applications in accordance with established criteria.

For more information, please call the FLEX department at American Councils: 202-833-7522.

American Councils for International Education

1776 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20036

Telephone: 202-833-7522

E-mail: FLEXProgram@americancouncils.org

Website: www.americancouncils.org

*"You must learn from the mistakes of others.
You can't possibly live long enough to make
them all yourself."*

- Sam Levenson

ATTENTION JSP GRADS!

JSP Follow-up Meetings

There will be 2 JSP Follow-up Meetings in November. Join us to discuss your job search progress and share information!

The Follow-up Meetings will be held at 10:00 a.m. in the Shultz Center on these dates:

November 9 – Room E-2118

November 23 – Room E-2118



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